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THE MR. AND MRS. ISAAC D.
FLETCHER COLLECTION

BEGINNING on March 4, the "Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection," bequeathed to the Museum in 1917 by Isaac D. Fletcher, will be shown in the large room on the second floor, Gallery D 6, which was last used for the memorial exhibition of paintings by Thomas Eakins.

The bequest was a notable one, not alone in the extent and value of the objects of art it embraced, but, as the President of

component parts, which will be exhibited alongside of similar material already in the Museum, carefully distinguished, as usual, by labels.

The following paragraphs reveal the comprehensiveness and value of this notable collection, which in the many countries and periods of art represented and in the variety of techniques embraced forms for the present a small museum in itself.

CLASSICAL ART

Among the objects of classical art coming to the Museum through Mr. Fletcher's bequest is a magnificent Apulian vase, 3 ft. 3 in. high. It is a splendid example of the class of pottery produced by the Greeks of Apulia during the fourth century, when the import of Athenian vases had been cut off and they were obliged to produce their own wares. In technique and shape it is of course closely related to its Athenian models; but the style of the decoration, with its profuse use of white and other colors and its crowded composition, shows that the taste of the Athenians and that of the Apulians were in marked contrast. Where the Athenians aimed at simplicity and fine workmanship, the Apulians cared less for the execution, and more for rich, florid effects. The same taste is shown in the vase itself. Its large size makes it an imposing piece; but both in proportion and execution it lacks the precision and finish so characteristic of Athenian pottery. The subjects represented on the vase are familiar from other Apulian vase paintings; on each side of the body are mourners bringing offerings to a tomb in the form of a shrine with a representation of the deceased; while on the neck are a toilet scene and a woman crowned by two Erotes.

Another South Italian vase of the same period, 1 ft. 8½ in. high, belongs to a class known as Lucanian, which is as yet only sparsely represented in our collection. It differs from the Apulian in that it is less gaudy in coloring and simpler in composition. On our example are represented two groups of a woman giving a drink to a young warrior; the large heads of the figures are characteristic of the Lucanian style.



GLAZED BOWL

HERAKLES AND THE ERYMANTHIAN BOAR
I CENTURY B.C.—I CENTURY A.D.

the Museum has pointed out in an article published in the November BULLETIN, in the interesting manner in which the testator met the Museum problem of conditional gifts.

Two hundred and fifty-one objects of art have been selected by the Museum from those in Mr. Fletcher's home on Fifth Avenue and these are known as the Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection. The present exhibition of them is in accordance with the desire of Mr. Fletcher, as expressed in his will, that the collection should be "exhibited in its entirety separate from other exhibits, in some gallery or galleries to be temporarily set apart by the Museum for this purpose, for a period of not less than one year." Eventually the collection will be broken up into its

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PORTRAIT OF M^{LE}. CHARLOTTE DU VAL-D'OGNES
BY JACQUES LOUIS DAVID
THE MR. AND MRS. ISAAC D. FLETCHER COLLECTION

Besides these two vases the Museum receives eight pieces of ancient glass and two glazed bowls. The glass pieces are all of the Roman period, dating from the first to fifth century A.D., and are distinguished by their beautiful iridescence. A six-sided jug, of a type found chiefly in Palestine, is particularly fine with its rich purple and golden brown coloring. A purple bowl with brilliant red, green, and blue patches, is inscribed "Drink and long may you live," a common toast of the period.

Perhaps the most important additions to the classical collection are the two bowls covered with metallic glaze, one with ornamental motives, the other with vine branches and figures of Herakles carrying the Erymanthian boar. They belong to a rare fabric, dating from the first century B.C. or A.D., of which we are fortunate in having a number of fine examples (Classical Wing, Eighth Room, Case C); with these two additions our collection of such vases will be one of the most important known.

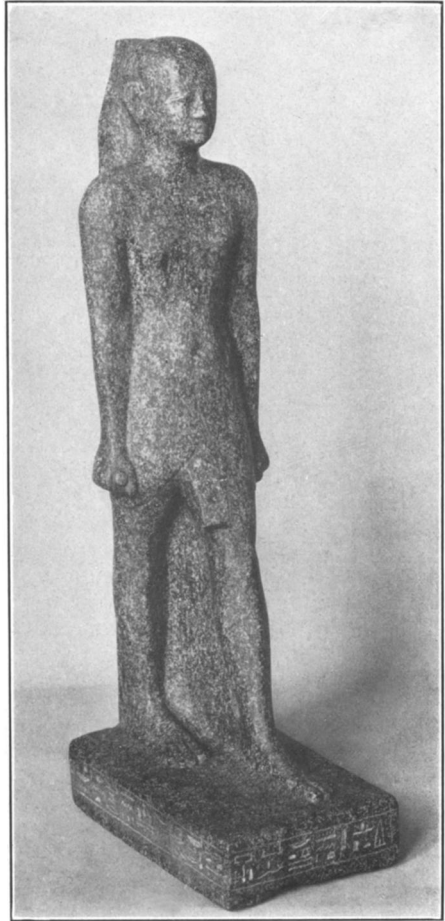
EGYPTIAN ART

Two representative examples of Egyptian art—a seated figure of a cat, in bronze, 15.9 cm. in height, dating from the early part of the Ptolemaic period, about 300-200 B.C., and an excellently modeled statuette, in diorite, 59 cm. in height, of a priest named Har-nofer—are included in the collection. The statuette may be dated closely to the XXX dynasty or the early years of the succeeding Ptolemaic period, i.e., about 400-200 B.C., and from trustworthy evidence is known to have been found a few years ago within the precinct of the great temple of Amon, at Karnak. In the long inscription cut upon the base and other parts of the figure, Har-nofer is described as "the Divine Father and Prophet of Amon in Karnak"; while the inscription also states that the statue was set up—"that his name might live"—by his eldest son, Ahmes.

PAINTINGS

Including nine water colors, the paintings of the collection number thirty-seven. Of these the Portrait of Mlle. Charlotte du Val-d'Ognes by Jacques Louis David is the

most striking. The Museum could hardly have acquired a more charming or more important example of French portraiture of the period of the Revolution. It was painted during the Directoire, and the austere taste of the time, the opposite of



STATUETTE OF A PRIEST
EGYPTIAN, XXX DYNASTY OR EARLY
PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

the fashion of the old régime, is shown in the simple arrangement. The place is a bare room lighted by a huge, uncurtained window through which one gets a glimpse of some official buildings. The young lady is looking up from her drawing portfolio; the window in front of which she

sits makes a rim of light about her, and reflections from her paper and the blank walls round about light up all the figure so that no detail is lost. David was cold and impersonal in his subject pictures,



STATUETTE, THE MADONNA, STONE
FRENCH, XIV CENTURY

but his portraits are quite different. In this case he was moved strongly by the charm of his sitter and on that account the work has a lasting appeal that his great classical subjects lack.

The older French art is represented by a winsome head of a lady by François

Boucher and a sprightly portrait by the younger Drouais, Madame Favart, who is shown playing a harpsichord. There is also a *Young Woman Knitting*, attributed to Chardin on the word of certain authorities, who claim it to be a youthful production of this master.

Among the later French works are found three pictures by Corot: *Ville d'Avray*—wooded banks of a pool with a woman gathering fagots, similar to a painting of the same subject in the Wolfe Collection and dating from the same period, namely 1871-74; *The Bohemians* (dated 1872), a more classical composition with remarkable depth and transparency of color; and *Two Men in a Skiff*, a small work of perfect accomplishment, of about the same period. *Autumn* by J. F. Millet, a powerful picture, shows a woman guarding turkeys on a windy hilltop against a luminous gray sky with driving clouds. *Going to Market*, by Troyon, is a small panel with the early morning effect often painted by this artist. A study of a peasant lighting his pipe by Bastien-Lepage, and excellent but not unusual examples by Diaz, Rousseau, Daubigny, and Raffaelli are comprised in this section. The work by the last-named artist is a view of Mr. Fletcher's house on Fifth Avenue.

The English portraitists are represented by Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Hoppner. By Gainsborough is a characteristic head of a Miss Sparrow; the Reynolds is the likeness of Elizabeth Reynolds, afterwards Mrs. Johnson, a niece of the painter. According to Reynolds' diary, she sat for the picture in 1758. It was probably painted as a marriage gift. Mr. Fletcher bought the painting from a member of the family, together with Reynolds' seals and watch. The English landscapes are a view of Glebe Farm with the tower of Langham Church, by John Constable, painted about 1830-35, and a *Landscape with Figures*, by George Morland.

There are but two Old Masters in the collection, a *Head of Christ* by Rembrandt, painted, according to Bode's catalogue, in 1659, and a *Portrait of a Man* by Rubens. The list of oil paintings is completed by Von Lenbach's *Portrait of a Young Woman*,

Fritz von Uhde's *Going Home*, a Landscape with Distant Mountains by Wyant, and a portrait of Mr. Fletcher by Eksergian.

Among the water colors are two brilliant pictures by Jongkind, a landscape sketch by Gainsborough, and a copy after Pieter de Hooch by Bonvin. There are also two miniatures in the collection, one by Shelley, somewhat in the style of Cosway, and one attributed to Pierre Adolphe Hall.

EUROPEAN SCULPTURE

Five pieces of Gothic sculpture are particularly desirable accessions. A stone group, of several figures, representing the Kiss of Judas, is a fine example of French sculpture, dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. A charming statuette, in stone, of the Virgin and Child, exhibits that grace and sensibility which characterize French sculpture of the fourteenth century. Our piece dates from the later half of that century and was probably made in the Île-de-France. Similar in style is another, somewhat larger statue of the Madonna. French stone sculpture toward the close of the fourteenth century or in the early years of the fifteenth century is represented by a statue of a youthful saint seated and writing. A statue of Saint James the Greater is typical of Gothic sculpture in the late fifteenth century; it is possibly Burgundian work.

French sculpture in the eighteenth century is exemplified by a graceful statuette, in terracotta, of a young girl holding flowers, by Claude Michel Clodion, 1738-1814. A marble group by Rodin brings us down to modern times. Although Rodin's style often shows an affinity to the vigorous sculptural art of the Middle Ages, in this group it is more closely related to the art of the French eighteenth century; so exquisitely embodied in the Clodion statuette just mentioned.

EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ART

The collection includes nine panels of stained glass dating from the later part of the sixteenth century or the first half of the seventeenth, and probably of Flemish

or North French workmanship. Although the colors lack the richness that we find in Gothic stained glass, the panels are interesting in design and in the skilful use of Renaissance decorative motives.



STATUETTE, TERRACOTTA
BY CLAUDE MICHEL CLODION

As to other Renaissance material, we may note a small Flemish tapestry of the late sixteenth century, representing a garden scene; a Limoges enamel plaque by Nardon Pénicaut (worked 1495-1520); and a Gubbio lusted plate of the sixteenth century. French enameling of the eigh-

teenth century is illustrated by several examples, including four snuff boxes. Two eighteenth-century miniatures, two French lace fans, and a Meissen group of the same period, may also be mentioned.

NEAR EASTERN ART

Near Eastern art is essentially an art of decoration in which representation, when it occurs, is strictly subordinated to decorative requirements. The human figure plays but a small part in the art of the Mohammedan East. When it does



JUG, RAKKA WARE
MESOPOTAMIA, XII-XIII CENTURY

appear—and this is equally true of faunal and floral motives—we note that the artist of the Near East has not attempted to create illusions of reality, but has translated nature into terms of pure design. This love of ornament, which is so typical of the Near East, was fostered, no doubt, by the Koranic prohibitions with respect to the representation of living forms, but, at the same time, it is probably a deep-seated, racial characteristic. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the art expression of the Near East is studied at its best in such branches of the decorative arts as ceramics and textiles. Certainly in these fields of art the Near East attained an eminence second to none.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were enthusiastic collectors of Persian and Mesopotamian ceramics. In reviewing this part of the collection, we may commence with a notable group of Rakka wares, dating from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Of this beautiful glazed pottery, with its simple, purely Arabic designs, there are five large jars, a bowl, and a jug. The lustrated pieces are particularly interesting, as it is contended that the origin of the art of lustering occurred in Mesopotamia, whence it spread to Syria, Egypt, Persia, etc. Rakka, situated on the Euphrates River, was the favorite site of the Caliph Haroun-al-Rashid in the ninth century.

Of even greater interest, perhaps, is an exceptionally important group of Rhages polychrome ware, dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These beautifully decorated bowls and ewers, with their characteristic designs of men and women, richly costumed, seated, standing, or on horseback, are among the most charming achievements of the Near Eastern ceramic artist. The drawing is distinguished for its expressive quality, and the colors—greens, reds, and blues, sometimes relieved with touches of gold—contrast agreeably with the ivory-colored ground. Rhages produced not only this polychromed ware, so superbly illustrated in this collection, but also a lustrated ware similar in design and of equal technical perfection. Although this latter type is not here represented, Rhages lustrated pottery may be well studied in the Museum collections. The Fletcher Collection also includes a few fine pieces of Rhages pottery differing from the two classes described above.

The ancient city of Rhages, situated a little to the north of Teheran, reached the apogee of its prosperity under the caliphate of Mansour, when Rhages rivaled Bagdad in the splendor of its monuments, but this era came to an abrupt close with the Tartar invasion under Genghis Khan. When Yacoub, the Arabian geographer, visited the city in 1221, Rhages had just been sacked by the Mongols. The city never recovered its former prosperity, although it is probable that ceramic production continued for some years after the destruction

of the city. The tumuli or ruins of Rhages have yielded a quantity of beautiful pottery. The twelve Rhages pieces in the collection are exceptional in beauty of design and excellence of preservation.

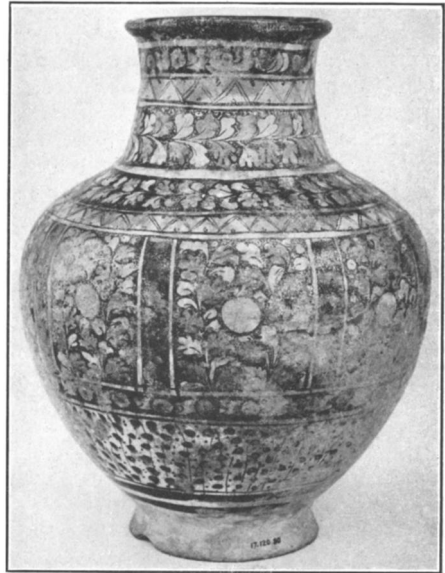
The Sultanabad wares constitute another interesting group of early Persian ceramics. In comparison, however, with the Rhages wares, they appear to have been the work of provincial ateliers, lacking something of the refinement and subtlety which characterize the Rhages productions. Yet, it is undeniable that the Sultanabad pieces, with their graceful designs of birds and flowers, silvered by time with an exquisite iridescence, have a very considerable charm. The pieces in the collection date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The later ceramic arts of the Near East are represented by a large group of Persian wares, mostly Koubatcha, numbering in all fifty-five pieces, and dating from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth. These pieces are decorated with a great variety of designs, in which floral motives are drawn with a freedom of handling—a sketchy quality, as it were—which is thoroughly characteristic. The coloring is often extremely pleasing, a brownish tone harmonizing the colors into subdued richness. We may mention here, in passing, a large, marble jar with Cufic inscriptions around the shoulder—a fine example of Arabic work in Egypt in the fourteenth century.

The collection contains twenty fine rugs, mostly of the so-called Ispahan, Polish, and Ghiordes types. One of the most important rugs is a late sixteenth-century rug with animal designs, of Northwest Persian (Tabriz?) manufacture. Among the decorative motives are animals, seated figures, and floral devices. The rug is a companion piece to one given to the Museum in 1908 by Alexander Smith Cochran. Another remarkable example of Persian weaving in the sixteenth century is a rug with tree designs. From the central medallion spring four flowering trees with perched and flying birds; this tree motive is repeated in other parts of the field. The border is especially fine. Beau-

tiful in itself, and interesting for comparison with the later Ghiordes rugs, is a prayer rug with inscriptions from the Koran, North Persian, late sixteenth century.

The so-called Ispahan type of rug, probably made at Herat, in Eastern Persia, is well represented by several examples. These rugs are of the late sixteenth or seventeenth century. They exhibit the usual floral motives, with palmette and lancet leaves in balanced designs, and the rich coloring characteristic of these rugs.



JAR, SULTANABAD
PERSIAN, XIV CENTURY

The so-called "Polonaise" or Polish rugs, woven in Persia in the first half of the seventeenth century, probably at the imperial manufactory, are among the most sumptuous of Oriental weavings. These beautiful fabrics of silk, gold, and silver resemble the "Ispahan" carpets in design, but are distinguished by their unusual color scheme, in which pastel shades of lavender, rose, and other tender colors are conspicuous. These delicate hues do not accord with the Persian fondness for pure, rich colors, but it must be remembered that they were woven for European use—it would appear that they were mostly sent

as gifts from Shah Abbas of Persia to European courts—and the color schemes and the lavish use of gold and silver corresponded with the taste of the destined owners. The five “Polonaise” rugs in this collection are superb examples of their kind. A small group of eighteenth-century Turkish prayer rugs, known as Ghiordes, although not so fine as the Persian, are skilfully woven and interesting in pattern.

FAR EASTERN ART

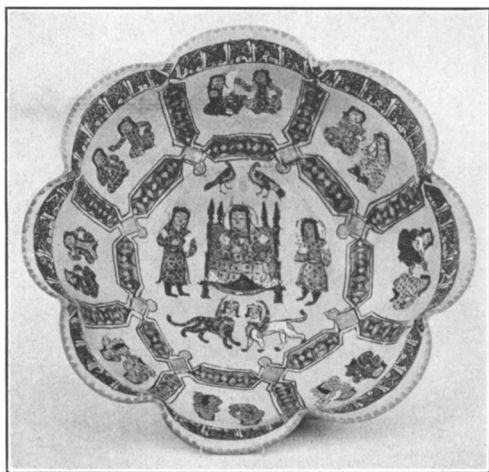
Chinese ceramics form an important part of the collection, potteries of the Ming period and porcelains of the eighteenth century. One case contains, in addition to a T'zu Chou jar with a brown-black design on a cream-colored, soft white glaze, eight examples of the early and later Ming pottery jars and vases, decorated with colored glazes of the temperate kiln. These vessels with their deep purple and aubergine glazes, the earliest of which date from Hsuan-te's reign (1426-1435) were made during the Ming period and up to the early times of K'ang hsi's reign (1662-1722). The ornament was carefully provided with raised, later with engraved

outlines to prevent the enamels running into each other; they were the forerunners of the enameled porcelains and potteries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the potter had the glaze in sufficient control to discard the relief outlines. Two very large and decorative fishbowls in the center of the room belong to the same class.

Then come in order of date the large blue and white vases on pedestals decorating the room and a fine specimen of the famille verte, a large vase decorated with colored enamels on porcelain.

In a case against the east wall are the K'ang hsi and later monochromes, excellent specimens of a class so highly appreciated in America and certainly seen to best advantage in this country. A beautiful apple green jar and a good example of the peach bloom variety will draw the attention of the numerous lovers of this decorative ware.

The third case and numerous pedestals hold the Yung Ch'eng and Ch'ien Lung porcelains of the famille rose, where pink derived from gold gives quite a new aspect and added gaiety to the eighteenth-century porcelain.



BOWL, RHAGES POLYCHROME WARE
PERSIAN, XIII CENTURY



PRAYER RUG, PERSIAN, XVI CENTURY